

## Press release

Embargoed until 1 October 2020



### Harper Street Project to Proceed

Stoke-on-Trent has had a significant boost as funds are secured by regeneration charity, Re-Form Heritage, to transform Harper Street.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has confirmed additional funding for Harper Street: *Engagement in Heritage* which means this important project can now proceed. This additional funding means that The National Lottery Heritage Fund is investing over £1.5m into the project.

In total, £2.5m will be invested into the transformation of the long-derelict terrace and a programme of activities delivered with the local community. The National Lottery funding sits alongside a recent grant from Historic England for £245,000 and grants and loans from other bodies including Architectural Heritage Fund, Bernard Sunley Foundation, Charles Hayward Foundation, Denise Coates Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Red Industries Landfill Communities Fund, Stoke-on-Trent City Council Community Investment Fund and Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Enterprise Partnership Growing Places Fund.

Re-Form Heritage specialises in revitalising communities through the regeneration of their historic buildings. Now Re-Form will be able to undertake the restoration and rejuvenation of the eleven former pottery workers' houses which make up the Harper Street terrace. The project will create a new heritage attraction focusing on the domestic life of the early 20th century pottery worker, alongside workshop and retail space for seven creative businesses. The terrace will also contain a dedicated store for the Middleport Pottery collection and archive, and a public research room to allow people to study items from the archive, many of which will be digitised for the first time. A modern community centre will also be created, offering community activities and support services via Middleport Matters Community Trust and a Changing Places toilet facility will support visitors with additional needs.

The terrace sits directly in front of Middleport Pottery, the Grade II\* listed Victorian pottery, and now popular heritage attraction owned and operated by Re-Form Heritage. The Harper Street scheme adds to the visitor appeal of Middleport Pottery, strengthening the tourism offer in Stoke-on-Trent and

celebrating the craftsmanship and artistry of makers both past and present. There is a strong association between the two sites, with the end-terrace previously being home to the Middleport Pottery Lodge Keeper who was responsible for overseeing access to the pottery. The new heritage attraction will present the Lodge Keeper's House as it might have been in the 1930s and will be formed in collaboration with residents and volunteers to incorporate stories and memories of life in the Potteries.

Clare Wood, Re-Form Heritage Chief Executive said: *"This is a great example of what is made possible by players of the National Lottery. We are extremely grateful for the additional funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the other generous supporters of the scheme. It is a point of real pride to be able to repair and restore this terrific piece of Victorian architecture, whilst also supporting 13 new jobs, collaborating with the community and bringing the collections and stories associated with Harper Street to life. With space for new businesses to flourish, the community to come together and facilities to support an enjoyable day out for those with profound and multiple disabilities, the project is a true blend of the historic and the modern and demonstrates the incredible potential of multi-layered, place-based regeneration."*

Anne Jenkins, Director, England, Midlands & East at The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: *"Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we are proud to be able to support the renovation project of one of the last remaining undeveloped and now derelict Victorian terraces in the Trent & Mersey Canal Conservation Area. Re-Form Heritage will not only enhance the visitor experience at Middleport Pottery, but also safeguard a piece of social history and bolster commercial opportunities, all of which will come together to aid the wider regeneration of the area."*

Vicki Gwynne, Operations Manager at Middleport Matters Community Trust said: *"Middleport Matters is thrilled to be part of this fantastic project in partnership with Re-Form. As well as the project celebrating the history of local families who have worked in the pottery, the new community centre will provide a flexible, purpose built, accessible space the whole community can benefit from."*

## Notes for Editors

### Re-Form Heritage

Re-Form Heritage is a registered charity specialising in the restoration and rejuvenation of historic buildings at risk of decay or demolition. Re-Form transforms these historic buildings into local assets, creating job opportunities and catalysing wider social and economic benefit. Re-Form owns and operates Middleport Pottery and is currently working to save and return modern foundry activity to the Whitechapel Bell Foundry site. Re-Form's current capital project is the *Harper Street: Engagement in Heritage* scheme.

[www.re-form.org](http://www.re-form.org)

Registered charity number: 1059662

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The *Harper Street: Engagement in Heritage* project will renovate eleven Victorian terraced houses adjacent to Middleport Pottery. The terrace, located in the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area, will be transformed into a new heritage attraction, studio & workshop space, publicly accessible archive and community centre for Middleport's residents. The project will contribute significantly to growing Middleport Pottery and Stoke-on-Trent's reputation as a heritage visitor destination.

[www.re-form.org/harper-street](http://www.re-form.org/harper-street)

Project architect: Buttress ([www.buttress.net](http://www.buttress.net))

Project management and QS services: Greenwood Projects ([www.greenwoodprojects.com](http://www.greenwoodprojects.com))

### **The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

Using money raised by the National Lottery, the National Lottery Heritage Fund inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future.

[www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk)

### **Historic England Repair Grants for Heritage at Risk**

Historic England gives grants for the repair and conservation of listed buildings, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens. This includes project development actions which enable repair or improved future management. The Heritage at Risk programme protects and manages the historic environment. The public body works with owners, friends groups, developers and other stakeholders to find solutions for 'at risk' historic places and sites across England.

[www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)

### **Middleport Matters**

Middleport Matters is a Company Limited by Guarantee which aims to help make Middleport a safe, thriving and welcoming place for all. Working alongside local residents and businesses as well as other services, Middleport Matters facilitates and delivers personal and skills development, employment and volunteering opportunities, environmental improvements and other community projects. All activity is community led, identified through engagement with local residents and businesses or through identifying 'gaps in services' which would make a positive difference to the people in the area.

[www.middleportmatters.co.uk](http://www.middleportmatters.co.uk)

### **Stoke-on-Trent City Council Community Investment Fund**

The Stoke-on-Trent City Council Community Investment Fund is making available £2.7m in funding over the next three years for projects across Stoke-on-Trent. The Community Investment Fund provides support for on-going activities, funding to get new activities off the ground and provides opportunities for communities to become more resilient against the risks of Covid-19.

[www.stoke.gov.uk/cif](http://www.stoke.gov.uk/cif)

## **Contact**

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